

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 315 252

RC 017 367

AUTHOR Marin, Christine
TITLE Mexican Americans on the Home Front: Community Organizations in Arizona during World War II.
PUB DATE Apr 87
NOTE 29p.; Paper presented to the National Association for Chicano Studies (Boulder, CO, April 1987). For related article, see RC 017 368.
PUB TYPE Historical Materials (060) -- Information Analyses (070) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Community Action; Community Organizations; Community Support; *Ethnic Discrimination; Females; Local History; *Mexican American History; Mexican Americans; *Patriotism; Social History; *Social Organizations; World War II
IDENTIFIERS *Arizona; Chicano Studies

ABSTRACT

During World War II Arizona's Mexican-American communities organized their own patriotic activities and worked, in spite of racism, to support the war effort. In Phoenix the Lenadores del Mundo, an active fraternal society, began this effort by sponsoring a festival in January 1942. Such "mutualistas" provided an essential support system in the face of racism and discrimination, and were sources of cultural, social, and religious cohesion in Mexican-American communities. These societies spoke out after several blatant incidents of discrimination against Mexican-American teenagers, and later organized a Phoenix youth group that collected 2,200 pounds of old rubber for the war effort. Community organizations in Phoenix and Tucson also: (1) organized volunteer cotton pickers when a labor shortage threatened the crop, badly needed for parachute and blimp manufacture; (2) sponsored social gatherings in honor of Chicano military cadets; (3) arranged bilingual community education classes in American citizenship; (4) collected donations to provide cigarettes to soldiers overseas; (5) sold war bonds and war stamps; (6) collected clothing for the Red Cross; (7) planted victory gardens; (8) collected scrap metal and foil for recycling; and (9) provided child care services for mothers performing war-related activities. After the war most organizations disbanded, but one Tucson women's group continued to perform community service until 1976. This paper contains 30 endnotes. (SV)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

☒ This document has been reproduced as
received from the person or organization
originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve
reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this docu-
ment do not necessarily represent official
OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Christine Marin

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Mexican Americans On the Home Front:
Community Organizations in Arizona
During World War II.

By: Christine Marin ^(C)

The Mexican American¹ experience in Arizona during the World War II period can be studied from new perspectives and viewpoints. Other than in its main importance in the social history of ethnic minorities in the Southwest, it can be placed in the context of United States social history. It can certainly be placed in the context of Mexican American, or Chicano history, since World War II was a major turning point for Mexican Americans.

It is generally accepted by Chicano historians that World War II provided a variety of opportunities for changing and improving economic and social positions of Mexican Americans.² While the soldiers were exposed to life outside the barrio and later the G.I. Bill of Rights to provide them higher education, job training, business and home loans, those left behind at home continued to struggle with the evils of racism and discrimination still common and prevalent in their communities. Mexican Americans were still segregated in theatres, and restaurants, and barred from public swimming pools, and dance halls, and other establishments. Inferior education or lack of educational opportunities remained a deep-seated problem in the Southwest in general, and in Arizona in particular. In Arizona history, the war determined the role it was to play in its view and treatment and recognition of its own ethnic minorities.

This paper does not attempt to analyze the military history of Arizona's role in World War II. It does, however, try to explain the manner which Mexican Americans organized themselves within their own

ED315252

RC017367

communities to become important, patriotic Americans in wartime. It also shows that Mexican Americans in Phoenix and Tucson, in spite of racism, supported each other's efforts to combat such racism and "help win the war" for all Americans. Such activism in wartime was complemented and even duplicated in other Mexican American communities throughout the state.

There are some problems, however, in this paper of Mexican American participation on the Home Front in Arizona's history during World War II. For example, one cannot build on previous literature, since little has been written and analyzed on this topic.³ Most Arizona historians or scholars have virtually ignored the ethnic history of Mexican Americans during this important period. In my opinion, they have failed miserably to recognize a valid, fascinating, and viable aspect of Arizona history.⁴

New Mexico's historian, Gerald D. Nash, however, offers new insight on how World War II transformed the American West from a "colonial economy based on the exploitation of raw materials into a diversified economy that included industrial and technological components."⁵ His contention is that this changed economy encouraged the influx of large numbers of ethnic minorities in the West, especially Mexican Americans and Blacks, and thus diversified the ethnic composition of the West. To say this is true for Arizona, a state which is increasingly becoming an important region to the United States due to its rising growth and population, requires further study and investigation by social scientists and those who analyze

and compile economic and demographic data.

Arizona was organized as a territory in 1863 and was admitted to the Union as the forty-eighth state in 1912. Its population on April 1, 1940, according to the Sixteenth Census, was 499,261, which represented an increase of 63,688, or 14.6 percent, as compared with the population on April 1, 1930. Three major race classifications were distinguished in the Sixteenth Census tabulations, namely White, Negro, and "other races." Persons of Mexican birth or ancestry who were not definitely American Indian or of other nonwhite races were classified as White in 1940. Thirty percent of Arizona's population was represented by persons of Mexican descent. Approximately 15,000 Mexican and Mexican Americans lived in Phoenix; and it has been estimated that 12,000 of that same group lived in Tucson in 1940.⁶

Mexican Americans in Phoenix at this time lived in the same barrios they traditionally lived in when the Anglo-American speculators and carpetbaggers and entrepreneurs arrived in 1867. This area was near the south side of the Salt River. The land was undesirable to the Anglo, mainly because of occasional heavy flooding and later, because of its proximity to unsightly railroad tracks. By 1930, the large Mexican barrio had been split into two distinct sections. The poorer district, bounded by Washington, Sixteenth, and Twenty-fourth streets and the river, contained a shack town of the poorer Mexicans, and a "7-Up Camp," a block of shacks along the north side of the railroad tracks housing hundreds

of Mexican families. The second section of this same barrio was concentrated between Second and Fourth Avenues south of Madison Street.⁷ By 1940, this same large barrio consisted of smaller barrios from within, such as "Cuatro Milpas," "Little Hollywood," and "Golden Gate," for example. Here, Mexicans and Mexican Americans owned their small businesses, stores, houses, and built and attended their own churches; they generally lived apart and away from the Anglo residential areas and pockets of Anglo growth and business and economic development, which grew further north of the barrio. That the Mexicano traditionally lived in sub-standard housing and poverty was a negative reflection and attitude on the part of the Anglo business and community leaders who dominated the city, and who collectively preferred to ignore the sad plight of members who shared their same community. ⁸.

Various sectors of Phoenix's Mexican American community readily supported the war effort almost immediately after the war was declared late in 1941. The Leñadores del Mundo (Woodmen of the World), an active Mexican fraternal and life insurance society in the community, sponsored the "Diamond Jubilee" to show Mexicano support for the war effort and for President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The festival and dance was held at the meeting hall of the Leñadores on the President's birthday, January 30, 1942.⁹.

Other mutualistas, such as the Alianza Hispano-Americana, the Club Latino Americana and La Sociedad Mutualista Porfiro Diaz were also active in Phoenix and throughout the state during this

period, and had begun to compile a remarkable record as early as 1894. Such mutualistas provided an essential support system for the Mexicano against vestiges of racism and discrimination. Many proved to be the sources of cultural, social, and religious cohesion in Mexicano communities, and they remained strong and solid organizations in serving the needs of the Mexicanos.¹⁰

Racism towards young Mexicano boys and girls receiving civil defense training and instruction were reported to the Governor of the state, Sidney Preston Osborn, by a well-known and respected Mexican American community leader from Tucson, Vicente Alfaro. Two state-wide National Defense Training Schools were set up under the federal jurisdiction of the National Youth Administration. The National Youth Administration was a New Deal program initiated on June 26, 1935, and provided for the educational and employment needs of America's youth. Resident vocational training centers provided classroom instruction in clerical work, machine tool work, arch welding, and library skills, for example.

The training school for the boys was in Tempe, and the other school for the girls was located in Coolidge. Coolidge was approximately 25-30 miles south of Phoenix, and was located in another county, Pinal County. Tempe¹¹ at this time was a small farming and stock raising community with a population of approximately 3,000 people, and was just nine miles east of Phoenix, along the Salt River. Vicente Alfaro knew of Mexicano boys and girls who were cruelly subjected to racial and ethnic slurs, segregated in their teaching surroundings, and verbally abused and embarrassed among the other Anglo students. In his own

correspondence to Governor Osborn, he wrote:

"Among the youth present the opening day were numerous representatives of the Spanish-American race from the various cities throughout the state including Tucson, which sent a major number. Upon presenting themselves at the aforesaid project in Tempe, the Spanish-American youth was informed by ...Mr. Cox [Tempe director of the school] in not very flattering terms that as Spanish-Americans were not fit for employment in National Defense Work, it was utterly useless for them to start receiving instruction at his project...With respect to the Coolidge project of the N.Y.A. it appears that a similar situation exists and that discrimination of the most vile nature was and is being practiced. The girls were and are being treated as dirty Mexicans and Greasers and looked upon as outcasts." 12.

Alfaro told the Governor in his letter that many Mexican American Tucson families brought this situation to his attention, and asked him to rectify the discrimination, and to ask the Governor to correct these injustices. Alfaro also reminded the Governor in very diplomatic terms that since the United States espoused a "Good Neighbor Policy" in order to gain the friendship of neighboring Latin American countries, then that policy should begin to "set our house in order and create goodwill, understanding, and unity among the potpourri[sic] of races and nationalities which constitute the people of the United States of America... 13. In his reply to Alfaro, Governor Osborn reiterates various platitudes and clichés of Americanism, and agrees with Alfaro that all American citizens are certainly

entitled to fair and just treatment. He also reminds Alfaro that the NYA is a "federal set-up and one with which the governor, or no state official, has anything whatever to do. It is certainly under the control and management of the United States government."¹⁴. There is nothing in the documentation to show whether or how this matter was ever resolved. However, the Governor does ask Jane H. Rider, the Arizona Youth Administrator of the NYA, to investigate Alfaro's complaints. The record, however, is not clear, and is incomplete; it therefore shows no reply to his request; nor is there correspondence from the Governor to Vicente Alfaro regarding these incidents of racism in Tempe.¹⁵

Mexican American youths again were targets of racism in the copper mining community of Morenci, located approximately 250 miles southeast of Phoenix. And again, the Governor's lack of action to correct a racist incident disappointed the Mexican Americans who sought his help. This time, several Mexicano leaders from Phoenix, who were active sponsors and organizers of the city's only Mexican American Boy Scout troop, appealed to Governor Osborn in the Spring of 1942¹⁶ to use his power of office to change a long time segregation policy of two Morenci facilities: the Morenci Club, and the Longfellow Inn.¹⁷

The Morenci Club offered recreational facilities to Anglos only, and was owned by the Phelps Dodge Copper Corporation. The Longfellow Inn was a public restaurant in the community. The Boy Scout Troop # 134, with S.A. Morales, William R. Sanchez, S.G. Murillo, and Alberto Montoya as its leaders, planned on

attending a two-day Music Clinic at the Morenci Club. Here, the group was to learn about the use of instruments and musical arrangements in the performance of musical events for their communities. Young boys and girls would sing and play patriotic music, and hear various groups perform their music. But their attendance and participation at the event was called off when the Scout leaders read in a local newspaper publicizing the event that "the Morenci Club and Longfellow Inn were not open to Spanish-American people." The article continued with this note: "Please caution your students on this as we do not wish anyone to be embarrassed." ¹⁸. Outraged at such blatant and open racism aimed at the young Boy Scouts who symbolized the youth and democracy of the United States, the scout leaders sent a signed petition to the Governor asking him to send a symbolic public apology on his behalf to the newspaper that published the article. They expressed to Governor Osborn the humiliation and embarrassment and shame felt by the boys in the troop, and reminded him that these boys were American citizens who were entitled to fair and honest and democratic treatment in their own state. But no apology ever appeared in the Phoenix nor the Morenci newspapers decrying such policies in regards to the incident.

In spite of this racial atmosphere, other Mexican American youths in Phoenix participated in a wartime crisis that affected the country at large. When the Standard Oil Company challenged all neighborhoods in July of 1942 to compete in the gathering of that much-needed and desired war product--rubber--the youngsters

from the Marcos de Niza housing project combed their Phoenix neighborhood for all materials made of rubber. They gathered old and discarded tires and other materials made out of rubber or latex. Their final accumulation of rubber totalled more than 2,200 pounds for the war effort, the most poundage gathered than that of other youth groups in the city. Their "prize" for such an accomplishment was in the form of a picnic-party. The group was treated to pies, sherbert, cakes, candy, sandwiches, and other refreshments. Rogelio Yanez, U.S. Housing Authority's Mexican American representative for the Marcos de Niza housing project, worked with other Mexicanos from various mutualistas such as the Leñadores del Mundo, and the Alianza Hispano Americana to sponsor and pay for the party.¹⁹

Other mutualistas such as the Club Latino Americana and La Sociedad Mutualista Porfiro Diaz were instrumental in the organization of Mexican American cotton pickers during a drastic shortage of farm labor in the valley's cotton fields in Phoenix. This labor shortage served as the catalyst for the total Mexican American community to become united with the larger Anglo community in an emergency harvest of cotton. In October, 1942, the "Victory Labor Volunteers" responded to the call.²⁰

Long-staple cotton was desperately needed to make parachutes, blimps, and gliders for the American troops overseas. These "Victory Labor Volunteers" generally were spontaneous organizations

made up of members of civic clubs, women's social clubs, churches, and garden and veterans groups within the Anglo segments of the Phoenix area. The volunteers were headed by an informal, voluntary committee whose sole interest was doing emergency war work whenever it was needed. Citizens throughout the city were encouraged to enroll and volunteer to harvest the cotton crop at a minimum of half a day a week. Volunteers were paid \$3.00 per 100 pounds for long-staple cotton, and \$1.50 per 100 pounds for short-staple cotton. Volunteers were to register with cotton canvassers at the Phoenix Chamber of Commerce office, or at nearby U.S. Employment Service offices. 21.

The Spanish-language newspaper in Phoenix, El Sol, ran a lengthy advertisement in its October 9, 1942 issue calling for the Mexican American community to participate in a patriotic show of Mexicano unity and become cotton pickers.²² Women and school children were also encouraged by various mutualistas to participate in the picking and bagging of cotton. The Phoenix Union School system permitted students to be absent from classes one day a week, and then only to pick cotton. Transportation was provided by the city on a daily basis from various pickup locations within the Mexican American barrios of Marcos de Niza, Golden Gate, Riverside, Cuatro Milpas, and East Lake. And transportation trucks left from neighborhood locations such as Conchos Grocery,

Washington Elementary School, and the Friendly House.²³ These trucks also picked up Mexicanos from residential areas near Fourteenth Street and Henshaw Road; Ninth Street and Washington; and East Lake Park to the cotton fields located in the valley. It was estimated that within a three-week period, 5,000 Mexican American workers, men, women, and children, harvested over 35,000 pounds of long-staple cotton for the nation's war effort.²⁴ Thus, this cotton harvest emergency brought a rare opportunity for Mexicanos and Anglos to share equally in a patriotic, community effort during a tense and difficult labor and cotton shortage.

These two examples of Mexican youth participation in Anglo-dominated activities may provide insight into how the Mexican Americans created their own separate support systems in times of crisis, and yet co-existed with Anglos to contribute to a larger demand. In these examples, national wartime emergencies enabled and even required these two distinctive groups to organize within their own communities to work together towards a larger common goal. The larger goals of collecting rubber and harvesting cotton were met, even though the two groups stayed within their own social boundaries and worked separately, and did not perform as work companions who work side by side. The tremendous response to these critical wartime emergencies also showed how the war briefly united Phoenixians who crossed ethnic lines in order to meet economic challenges. In these examples, each group contributed equally to a vision of American unity and American victory.

In the early stages of the war, Phoenix saw the activation of several military installations and air bases. Latino cadets undergoing training nearby were welcomed and honored by the Mexican American community with testimonial dinners, dances, social gatherings, and community meetings in the period from February 17 to March 10, 1942.²⁵ These cadets represented the countries of México, Brazil, Cuba, Costa Rica, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Guatemala, and symbolized Latin American friendship with the United States, and also her support of the Americans in wartime. Mexican American alumni from the Spanish Club of Phoenix Community College, "Los Ositos", helped in sponsoring and arranging dinners and receptions for the cadets throughout the Mexican American community, and arranged for cadets to be guests in many of the Mexicanos' homes.²⁶ The cultural ties shared among the community with these cadets reinforced any feelings of ethnic, cultural pride commonly shared by Mexican Americans whose country was at war, and whose country faced an uncertain future.

Mexican Americans in Phoenix participated in other community projects related to the war effort. American citizenship classes were taught by the bilingual staff of the Friendly House,²⁷ a social service center formed to provide for the needs of the Mexican and Mexican American community. Classes on the United States Constitution were held on a daily basis at the Friendly House, and were also available in the evening. Through the presentations of such classes, members of the Spanish-speaking community felt they were helping

in the war effort by studying to become American citizens. Obtaining American citizenship may have been an accepted way for the Mexicano to show his patriotism and loyalty to the United States and the war effort. It was, therefore, a unique opportunity for the Mexican American community to be accepted into the larger American society that reflected an ethnic bias and still maintained vestiges of racism and segregation in its social structure. Religious organizations in the community also enabled parishoners to enroll in citizenship classes. The Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church, located in the Marcos de Niza community at 909 East Washington Street, sponsored the newly formed Boy Scout Trooop No. 47 in 1943.

Mexican American boys were encouraged to become involved in the scouts' activities. Since it was felt that the American character was formulated and developed through the Boy Scouts organization, Mexican Americans believed that their youths could be molded into productive, patriotic, and loyal Americans eager to support their country in times of war.²⁸ Early enrollment numbered over 25 boys who became active in Troop No. 47, the only Spanish-speaking troop of the Boy Scouts organization in Phoenix.

When the ministers of the Phoenix Ministerial Alliance of Spanish Speaking Churches met in the Mexican Presbyterian Church in February of 1943, they adopted a resolution which urged the Mexican American community to participate in war related activities. The Alliance encouraged its members to take an active interest in

city politics, to register to vote in city elections.^{29.} Since the nation was at war, it was believed that Mexican Americans would become more interested in their community's political issues. Their votes would thus become important votes in support of the war effort abroad.

Another patriotic gesture in the form of public donations fostered in the Mexican American community in Phoenix in August of 1943. The editor of the Spanish-language newspaper, El Sol, Jesus Franco, and the prominent physician in the community, Dr. A.G. Del Valle Lugo, organized a drive to collect money for the purpose of purchasing cigars and cigarettes for the American soldier overseas, regardless of his ancestry or place of birth.

The local Mexican American community took advantage of this opportunity to donate whatever amounts of money they had for such tobacco purchases. Individuals were encouraged through various advertisements in El Sol to take their contributions to the newspaper's offices on Third Street and Washington. The patriotic fever infected the entire community. The cigarette drive began in mid-August and was scheduled to end on September 10. In spite of the wartime hardships imposed upon the community, the donations remained steady and consistent. Any amounts of money were accepted through El Sol, and those individuals who gave as little as ten cents contributed as much to the war effort as did those who donated one dollar or five dollars.

This patriotic gesture was lauded in issues of El Sol

throughout the duration of the tobacco drive. The names of those who contributed were acknowledged and printed in the newspaper. By the end of the drive in mid-September, almost \$300 was collected from the Mexican American community in a month's time.^{30.} And most of the donations were small ones. The money was deposited in a local bank by the Treasurer of the tobacco drive, Miguel G. Robles. He later presented the money to a military representative on behalf of the Mexican American community of Phoenix. No newspaper accounts were found to indicate that the Anglo community also participated in this drive, or a similar one; nor was there any indication that funds were collected for the purchase of cigarettes^{31.} for the American soldier abroad.

In 1944, the Mexican American community of Tucson was also doing its share to help win the war abroad. Mutual aid and benefit organizations such as the Alianza Hispano-Americana and the Leñadores del Mundo helped sell war bonds. Religious organizations within the Mexican Catholic parishes, such as El Centro Club and the Club San Vicente added their support by collecting scrap metal. Social and Service clubs such as the Club Latino, the Club Trienta, and Club Anáhuac also supported the Allied cause through various ways.^{32.}

While these were mainly either male or female-male clubs, other Mexican American women in the community played an equally important part in the Tucson war effort. Through the efforts of Rose Rodriguez, a secretary at Tucson City Hall and a member of the Junta Patriótica, a Mexican American community service

organization composed of both men and women, the organization known as the Asociación Hispano-Americana de Madres y Esposas (the Mexican American Mothers and Wives Association) was formed in 1944. 33.

The functions of this organization were similar to those of any other patriotic organization during this wartime period. Yet, the Mexican American women of Tucson also had some unique and distinct goals from the Anglo women who had their own separate social clubs and ladies' organizations. One of their specific goals was to lift the morale of the Mexican American soldiers who were away from the Tucson area. And another goal was to build a recreation center for the exclusive use of the Mexican American soldier.

These women did not purposely segregate themselves from the other kinds of wartime activities organized by the Anglo women; rather, they felt the need to reinforce that cultural, emotional, and traditional sentiment commonly shared among Mexican Americans who faced a wartime crisis: their loved ones were away at war, and were deeply missed by their own families. Through their own organization, these women would unite the Mexicanos and Mexicanas in their community, and would help them deal with the hardships of war.

The women in this organization were those who also had sons, husbands, brothers, or other family members in the military, and many were serving overseas. Their ages ranged from young to old, and they represented various socio-economic backgrounds. Many were young homemakers, others were working

class women who toiled as section hand workers on the Southern Pacific Railroad. Some women had paraprofessional office jobs such as that of secretaries or sales clerks; still others were much older women who maintained households while their eldest sons were away. And membership in the Asociación Hispano-Americana de Madres y Esposas was not strictly limited to married women or to the mothers of servicemen. All women who wanted to participate in the group were encouraged to do so.

The early activities of the Asociación focused on the sales of war bonds and war stamps. The Mexicanos and their families considered it a privilege to buy war bonds, as they believed that through such sales their men serving abroad would never be without military armaments needed to defend themselves in battlefront situations. ³⁴. In the period from April, 1944 to July, 1945, the Asociación Hispano-Americana de Madres y Esposas sold over \$1 million dollars worth of war bonds and war stamps. The purchase of these bonds and stamps were made by the Mexicano community in Tucson.

The Mexicanas of Tucson experienced war's daily trials and took up the home front responsibilities. They collected clothing for the Red Cross to be sent to war-torn, devastated countries. They also sent clothing to social service agencies in Mexico. ³⁵.

The women combed their neighborhoods for scrap metal. They saved foil from candy, gum, cigarette wrappers, and turned in large quantities of the foil to collection centers. The homemaker became just as important to the war effort as the women who worked in a defense job. Mexicanas planted their own "victory" gardens. They learned to bottle and to preserve vegetables and fruits. They saved waste fats and turned in their collection of fats and grease, which yielded glycerin for high explosives. They collected tin cans--the tin went into armaments and cans for the soldiers' C-rations.

The Mexicanas also maintained their household equipment in efficient shape and decreased fuel consumption. With an increasing demand for paper by the government, the supply of paper at home was reduced. They then salvaged old magazines and newspapers. They made things last, or else they did without. The Asociación offered childcare services in the members' homes for the mothers who were performing war-related services, such as donating blood and bandages to the Red Cross, or gathering food for the U.S.O., and for those women who performed duties required of them as air-raid wardens. Clearly, the Mexicanas proved their resourcefulness in the home. 36.

During the height of its activity, the Asociación incorporated into a non-profit entity and purchased land on which to build the recreation center it so eagerly sought to erect for the Mexican American soldiers of Tucson. The money needed to pay property taxes for the land came from the treasury and from their successful sales of their community newspaper, the Chatter. 37.

By August 1945, however, many Mexican American soldiers began to return home to Tucson. This signaled the steady decline of the Asociación. Some of the group's most active women soon resigned their membership, as their families were being reunited. Husbands, sons, brothers were home. With the war over, there was no longer a need for the mass distribution of Chatter. There were also no more war bonds and stamps to sell at community events or gatherings.

Nevertheless some of the women kept the organization active, despite the fewer numbers in the group. Their goal remained the same--that of building a recreation center for the Mexican American soldier. The women also remained busy helping families readjust to postwar life.

In August of 1945, the Asociación had \$2,700 in its treasury coffer.³⁸ While interest in the Asociación decreased over the postwar years, the activity of its leaders remained constant. Eventually, the demands of the Asociación on the few remaining members became too much to handle. Twenty years after the Asociación was organized, however, the Arizona Corporation Commission revoked the group's non-profit certification in 1964-65, citing inactivity for the action. Members had at times neglected to submit annual reports. But the Asociación struggled along, continuing its effort to remain a viable and strong community organization by

helping the needy within their community. In 1971, they again filed their reincorporation papers with the Arizona Corporation Commission, with the intention of raising funds to spend on providing for the needs of the elderly.

When they realized they were the only ones attending the group's meetings in 1976, the four remaining members of the Asociación, Lucía M. Fresno, Dolores C. Delgado, Luz M. López, and Juanita L. Loroña voted to dissolve the organization. 39.

Records do not show why the recreation center was not built after the war. It may have been too expensive to do so, and perhaps the treasury had been pretty much depleted by the property taxes the Asociación had to pay on the land it owned and intended for the center. Or perhaps the members no longer felt the center was necessary. The veterans were too pre-occupied with finding jobs and putting their lives back together again to be concerned about a recreation center. Other factors were to account for the inactivity of the Asociación over the years. As the members grew older, illness and perhaps a lack of mobility kept them from being as active in the organization. And Death also took its toll among the elderly women in the group. 40.

These Mexicanas showed their own unique unity of purpose, finding different ways of working together as Mexicanas and within their Mexicano community in a "man's war." The Asociación ceased to exist long after the war ended. And

it was their committment to helping their community that kept them together over the years.

In the war years, Mexicanos and Mexicanas in Arizona united their communities and committed themselves to fighting an American war, their war. And as they fought this war on the home front scene, they also fought to maintain their own unique ethnic identity. They strengthened their cultural bonds among themselves in order to reaffirm their own brand of an American identity.

Mexican Americans in Phoenix and Tucson needed their own heroes and heroines--men and women and children--who could personalize and simplify the larger wartime struggle. The Mexican Americans in these communities proved themselves to be such homefront heroes and heroines, meeting a challenge to do its share to advance the Allied cause, while retaining the morale of their Mexicano communities through social and cultural activities.

In spite of the culture clashes between the Mexican American and the Anglo, and the racism and prejudice ever prevalent against them, the Mexican Americans in Phoenix and Tucson still showed the same unity of purpose and intent in the 1940's that even the Anglo shared. And that intent was to help win the war abroad. Unfortunately, however, the great bond that seemingly held and united Americans from different ethnic strains--World War II--was not strong enough to break all the racist barriers

of the war years. The Mexican American soldiers fighting overseas for democracy abroad left behind those in their hometowns to struggle for this same goal at home, in Arizona. The Mexican communities of Phoenix and Tucson, men, women, and youths, created their own separate American home front activities in their own communities. These Mexican Americans also leave behind a historical legacy which is manifested in a cultural and ethnic pride which can be defined simply as Mexican Americanism.

This form of nationalism, pride in one's ethnicity and cultural history, coupled with the Mexican American's patriotic feeling of Americanism during the war years, convinced him that racism was un-American and also unpatriotic. Therefore, it was his duty and responsibility to eradicate it from his community.

The Mexican American soldier was the cultural and historical symbol of Americanism and social equality. At home, the Mexicano and the Mexican American was the brave patriot who remained loyal to America as he sacrificed his soldier-son for honorable causes of freedom and democracy. Such a sacrifice is the legacy the Mexican Americans of the 1940's leave behind for the rest of us to acknowledge and to remember.

NOTES

¹ The term "Mexican American" as used in this paper literally means a combination of both Mexican and American. I use it in a generic sense to include the Mexicano, the Latino, the Mexicans, the Spanish-American and the Hispano who lived in the southwestern states of Arizona, California, New Mexico, Texas, and Colorado. I may use the terms interchangeably in order to reflect the terminology used during the World War II period in the Southwest. Mexican Americans also used these terms interchangeably to identify themselves, and the terms are found throughout Spanish-language newspapers during this period. The terms group together those who speak Spanish, and imply a cultural, linguistic, and social bond which unites the Spanish-speaking in the Southwest.

² The role of the Mexican American in World War II in Chicano history has been interpreted by Rodolfo Acuña, Occupied America: a history of Chicanos (New York: Harper & Row, 1981); Ralph C. Guzmán, "The Political Socialization of the Mexican American People," (Ph. D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1970); Carey McWilliams, North From Mexico: the Spanish-Speaking People of the United States (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968); Matt S. Meier and Feliciano Rivera, The Chicanos: A History of Mexican Americans (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972); Robin Fitzgerald Scott, "The Mexican-American in the Los Angeles area, 1920-1950: from acquiescence to activity," (Ph.d. dissertation, University of Southern California, 1971). The work by Raul Morin, Among the Valiant: Mexican-Americans in WW II and Korea (Alhambra, Calif.: Borden Publishing Co., 1966) stands out as the definitive work which cites the military participation and outstanding heroism of the Mexican American soldier on the battlefield. Mario T. Garcia expertly defines and examines the rise of the Mexican American political generation in Los Angeles in his article, "Americans All: the Mexican American Generation and the Politics of Wartime Los Angeles, 1941-45," Social Science Quarterly, Vol. 65, No. 2, June, 1984, pp. 278-289; Christine Marin, "Chicanos in World War II Phoenix," Paper Presented at the National Association of Chicano Studies: the 10th Annual Conference. March 25-27, 1982. Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona.

³ Contributions made by Mexican American women in Tucson have been documented in: Christine Marin, "La Asociación Hispano-Americana de Madres y Esposas: Tucson's Mexican American Women in World War II," La Mexicana/Chicana. Renato Rosaldo Lecture Series Monograph. Vol. 1, Series 1983-84. (Tucson: Mexican American Studies and Research Center, University of Arizona, 1985), pp. 5-18.

⁴ Harry T. Getty, Interethnic Relationships in the Community of Tucson (New York: Arno Press, 1976) provides a social analysis of Tucson's Mexican American community during the period between 1945 and 1947. The prominent Spanish-language newspapers of Phoenix and Tucson, El Sol and El Tucsonense, should be considered primary sources of vital information for learning the important wartime activities of the Mexican American in these areas.

NOTES

⁵Gerald D. Nash, The American West Transformed: the impact of the Second World War (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), p. vii.

⁶U.S. Bureau of the Census. Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940. Population. Second Series. Characteristics of Population. Arizona. (Wash., D.C.: USGPO, 1941), pp. 3; 36; Nash, The American West Transformed, p. 110.

⁷Michael J. Kotlanger, "Phoenix, Arizona: 1920-1940," (Ph. D. dissertation, Arizona State University, Tempe, 1983), pp. 427-428.

⁸In 1941, the Phoenix Housing Authority completed the separate housing projects, "Marcos de Niza," for Mexican Americans, and the "Mathew Henson," for Blacks, on the south side of Phoenix. The housing project for the Anglos, "Frank Luke, Jr.", was built in east Phoenix. These three housing projects were constructed with a \$1,900,000 grant from a New Deal program and accommodated units for six hundred families. It is common knowledge that racism and discrimination towards ethnic and racial minorities prior to and during World War II was prevalent in Phoenix. See: Michael J. Kotlanger, "Phoenix, Arizona: 1920-1940," (Ph.D. dissertation, Arizona State University, Tempe, 1983); Herbert B. Peterson, "A Twentieth Century Journey to Cibola: Tragedy of the 'Bracero' in Maricopa County, Arizona, 1917-1921," (Masters Thesis, Arizona State University, 1975); Christine Marin, "Patriotism Abroad and Repression at Home: Mexican Americans in World War II." Unpublished Manuscript. 1977; James E. Officer, "Arizona's Hispanic Perspective," a Research Report, 38th Arizona Town Hall, May 17-20, 1981 (Phoenix: Arizona Academy, 1981); Bradford Luckingham, "Urban development in Arizona: the rise of Phoenix," Journal of Arizona History, Vol. 22, No. 2, (Summer, 1981), pp. 197-234; Shirley J. Roberts, "Minority Group Poverty in Phoenix," Journal of Arizona History, Vol. 14, No. 4, (Winter, 1973), pp. 347-362. See also the newspaper articles: "Que Hay Discriminación y Segregación de los Mexicanos en Arizona!" El Sol, 4 Feb. 1943, pp. 1;6; "Hay Escandalosa DISCRIMINACIÓN. Valientemente se enfrenta a esta situación el Diputado Francisco Robles y J.C. Carreon." El Sol, 11 Feb. 1943; pp. 1;6; "Perdonalos Señor." [Editorial] El Sol, 18 Feb. 1943, p. 2; "Advertancias acerca de la discriminación," El Sol, 13 March, 1942, p. 1; "Discriminación Mexicana en Phoenix," El Sol, 18 June 1943, pp. 1-2; "Afrentosa discriminación en Phoenix," El Sol, 2 July 1943, p. 1;8; "Phoenix will rot...unless it integrates, says a controversial report." New Times (Phoenix), 19-25 Dec. 1984; "Racial ban common in deeds in Valley, attorney maintains," Arizona Republic (Phoenix) 1 Aug. 86, Sec. A, p. 2.

NOTES

⁹"Grandioso Baile," El Sol, 23 Jan. 1942.

¹⁰The Alianza Hispano-Americana was a fraternal insurance society that was first organized in Tucson in 1894. Like other mutual aid societies in Arizona, the AHA offered low cost life insurance and social activities to its members. See: Kaye Lynn Briegel, "Alianza Hispano-Americana, 1894-1965: a Mexican American Fraternal Insurance Society" (Ph. D. dissertation, Univ. of Southern California, 1974); James D. McBride, "Liga Protectora Latina: an Arizona Mexican-American Benevolent Society," Journal of the West, Vol. 14, No. 4, (October, 1975) pp. 82-90; James E. Officer, "Sodalities and Systemic Linkage: the Joining Habits of Urban Mexican-Americans" (Ph. D. dissertation, Univ. of Arizona, Tucson, 1964); José Amaro Hernandez, "The Political Development of Mutual Aid Societies in the Mexican American Community; Ideals and Principals," (Ph. D. dissertation, Univ. of Calif. at Riverside, 1979). See also the newspaper accounts: "Resurgiran los Latinos," El Sol, 3 April 1942; "Los Mexicanos en Esfuerzo de Guerra," El Sol, 16 October 1942.

¹¹Tempe educators and city leaders were targets of the Mexicano's opposition to racism and discrimination in three separate incidents in 1912, 1925, and 1946. Mexicanos settled in what is now Tempe in 1865, when the Ft. McDowell military post was established. The early settlement of San Pablo, later known as "Mexican Town" by the Anglos of Tempe, was already firmly established in 1874. The town itself was later incorporated as Tempe by the Anglos in 1895. Just after Arizona statehood in 1912, the Mexicanos were the center of controversy, legal action, and racism when they learned they could not perfect title to their lands, which they developed, because their farms and homes were in what was called "Section 16." This area, which under the new Constitution of Arizona and its precedent Organic Act, was a school section, and was not subject to permanent settlement. Consequently, the Mexicanos lost their land. From 1914 to 1926, only Mexican children attended the Eighth Street School. In 1915, the Tempe School District made an agreement with the Arizona State Teachers' College (now known as Arizona State University) that allowed them to use Eighth Street School for a University Training School to establish Americanization programs for the segregated Mexican children in grades 1-3. The agreement lasted until 1950-51, when the primary students moved to Wayne Ritter School nearby. In 1925, Adolfo "Babe" Romo, whose family settled in the area in the 1800's, filed a lawsuit (now known as the "Landmark Case") in behalf of his children who were attending the segregated Eighth Street School. In October, 1925, Superior Court Judge Joseph Jenckes ruled the Romo children could attend the 10th Street Grammar School. The following Monday morning, several Mexican

NOTES

children attended school there. However, the enrollment at the Eighth Street School was completely Mexican American until 1945, during World War II. The third racial incident involved the desegregation of "Tempe Beach," the city's public swimming pool. Tempe Beach was opened in 1923, and did not admit Mexicans. On May 20, 1946, the Tempe Chamber of Commerce agreed to admit Mexican Americans to Tempe Beach in response to legal pressures from Mexican American World War II veterans from Phoenix who formed the Tony F. Soza Thunderbird Post #41 of the American Legion. See: Governor's Files: George Wiley Paul Hunt. Box 3. File Folder #29: "Schools, Segregation in." Arizona Department of Library Archives and Public Records. Phoenix, Arizona; Ruby Haigler, "Tempe, the Center of the garden spot of Arizona." Unpublished Manuscript, 1914. Arizona Collection. Hayden Library. Arizona State University, p. 7; "Historical and Architectural Survey. Prepared for the City of Tempe Neighborhood Development Program." Vol. 1. Prepared by a Joint Venture, CNWC Architects and Gerald A. Doyle & Associates. Unpublished Manuscript. 1976. Arizona Historical Foundation. Hayden Library. Arizona State University, p. 19; "Obituary: Rose Frank," Tempe Daily News, 8 Feb. 1985, p. A-11; Tempe School District No. 3. Centennial History. (Tempe: Tempe Elementary School District, 1977), p. 1; Rodolfo Acuña, Occupied America: a history of Chicanos. 2nd Ed. (N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1981), p. 330.

¹²See the correspondence from Vicente Alfaro to Governor Osborn, July 31, 1941 and August 8, 1941, in: Governor's Files. Sidney Preston Osborn. Listing 1940-1946. Box 19: "National Youth Administration for Arizona, 1940-1942." Arizona Department of Library, Archives and Public Records. Phoenix, Arizona.

¹³Ibid. Alfaro letter to Gov. Osborn, July 31, 1941.

¹⁴Ibid. Osborn letter to Vicente Alfaro, August 8, 1941.

¹⁵Ibid. Osborn letter to Jane Rider, August 8, 1941.

¹⁶Governor's Files. Sidney Preston Osborn. Listing. 1940-1946. Box 20: "Race Prejudice, 1941-1942." Arizona Department of Library, Archives and Public Records. Phoenix, Arizona.

NOTES

¹⁷Morenci was established as a mining camp in 1884. Bitter labor strikes and racial conflicts involving Mexicano miners and the Phelps Dodge Copper Corporation have occurred in the Clifton-Morenci mining districts since the late 1800's. Morenci is located in Greenlee County in southeastern Arizona, near the New Mexico border, and is approximately 250 miles southeast of Phoenix. See: Joseph F. Park, "The History of Mexican Labor in Arizona During the Territorial Period," (Masters Thesis, Univ. of Arizona, 1961); Roberta Watt, "History of Morenci, Arizona," (Masters Thesis, Univ. of Arizona, 1956); Michael E. Casillas, "Mexicans, Labor, and Strife in Arizona, 1896-1917," (Masters Thesis, Univ. of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1979), pp. 82-105; James Ward Byrkit, "Life and Labor in Arizona, 1901-1921: With particular reference to the Deportations of 1917," Ph. D. dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, 1972; James R. Kluger, The Clifton-Morenci Strike: labor difficulty in Arizona, 1915-1916 (Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 1970); A. Blake Brophy, Foundlings on the Frontier: racial and religious conflict in Arizona Territory (Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 1972); James B. Allen, The Company Town in the American West (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1966), pp. 43-49; 103.

¹⁸Governor's Files. Sidney Preston Osborn. Listing. 1940-1946. Box 20: "Race Prejudice, 1941-1942." Arizona Department of Library, Archives and Public Records. Phoenix, Arizona.

¹⁹"Los niños Mexicanos de Phoenix triunfaron en el certamen del hule," El Sol, 4 July 1942.

²⁰For lengthy accounts of the work achieved by the Mexican American "Victory Labor Volunteers," see the following newspaper articles: "Los Mexicanos en Esfuerzo de Guerra," El Sol, 16 October 1942; "Constituye un Mayúsculo Mérito para los Mexicanos que se han sumado a los Voluntarios de la Victoria," El Sol, 23 October 1942; and "La Pizca del algodón," El Sol, 30 October 1942.

²¹See the newspaper accounts: "Canvassers to seek cotton field army," Arizona Republic, 28 September 1942; "Labor Volunteers reach 3,476 total," Arizona Republic, 30 September 1942; "Arizona cotton-picking project needs 2,500 more workers," Arizona Republic, 3 October 1942; "Victory Labor drive sparks city's greatest community effort," Arizona Republic, 4 October 1942.

NOTES

²² "Muy Importante," [Advertisement], El Sol, 9 October 1942.

²³ The Friendly House was one of the agencies that grew out of the Americanization Movement. It was founded in 1921 through the efforts of the Phoenix Americanization Committee. Plácida Garcia Smith, a former teacher from Conejos, Colorado, and director of the Friendly House for the years 1931 through 1963, was active in the Mexicano community and became dedicated to helping in the Americanization of Mexican immigrants in Phoenix. For an excellent account of the Friendly House history and the Americanization Movement in Phoenix, see: Mary Ruth Titcomb, "Americanization and Mexicans in the Southwest: a history of Phoenix's Friendly House, 1920-1983" (Masters Thesis, Univ. of California at Santa Barbara, 1984).

²⁴ See: "La Pizca del algodón," El Sol, 30 October 1942 and "Victory Labor drive sparks city's greatest community effort," Arizona Republic, 4 October 1942.

²⁵ See the following: "Boletín de la Comunidad Marcos de Niza," El Sol, 17 February 1942; "En la comunidad Marcos de Niza," El Sol, 20 February 1942; "Homenaje a los Cadetes Latinos," El Sol, 23 February 1942.

²⁶ "El Junior College festeja a los cadetes Hispano-Americanos," El Sol, 10 March 1942.

²⁷ "Se darán clases de Constitución," El Sol, 4 February 1943.

²⁸ "Boy Scouts, Tropa 47 del Corazón de María," El Sol, 11 February 1943.

²⁹ "Vote is urged by ministers," Arizona Republic, 23 February 1943.

³⁰ For various accounts of this cigarette drive, see the following articles: "Para Los Soldados!," El Sol, 20 August 1943; "Se formaliza la campaña de colección de fondos para envío de cigarros a los soldados," El Sol, 27 August 1943; "La Colecta para cigarros," El Sol, 10 September 1943; "Nuestra colecta para los cigarros!," El Sol, 1 October 1943.